

September 2, 1969

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA )  
COUNTY OF RICHLAND ) BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

IN RE: Applications of the General Telephone Company ) DOCKET NO. 14, 305  
of the Southeast and the Pee Dee Telephone ) DOCKET NO. 14, 306  
Company, Inc., for rate relief. )  
ORDER NO. 14, 876

TO:[ GENERAL TELEPHONE COMPANY OF THE SOUTHEAST  
AND  
PEE DEE TELEPHONE COMPANY, INC.

The Commission on February 17, 1969 issued its Order No. 14,638, combining Docket Nos. 14, 305 and 14, 306, wherein it found that the service rendered by General Telephone Company of the Southeast and Pee Dee Telephone Company, Inc., (both hereinafter referred to as General), was inadequate to meet the needs of its customers and further, failed to meet the statutory test of reasonably adequate service. General was ordered to furnish to the Commission by April 24, 1969: A report exchange by exchange showing completion date of current projects and the dates when such improvements would be effective together with a certification from the Chief Executive Officer of General that the number of employees in its service area were both adequate in number and in training to provide proper service. Additionally, reports were to be received on a monthly basis itemizing each complaint received and action taken with regard thereto. Further, General was given ninety (90) days within which to furnish reasonably adequate service, and its failure to so provide within the time period stated would cause the Commission to adjust General's present rate schedules downward so that such adjustment would be reasonable, fair and sufficient based upon the type of service rendered. General has complied with the Order in furnishing such reports and upon receipt thereof, the Commission caused its staff to analyze these reports and make an on premise inspection of the plant facilities and personnel.

The testimony and exhibits received in the hearings before the Commission suggested that plant facilities then under construction, or to be constructed, would solve the problems admitted by General to be in existence. Substantially all of these projects have now been completed and have been placed into operation including such cut overs as were to have been made in accordance with General's testimony. The completion of these improvements has caused the Commission to rid itself of any doubt that the physical facilities are such as to provide reasonably adequate service. We recognize in many respects that the completion of these projects have been the result of concentrated efforts on behalf of General and to the extent that such activities were completed in accordance with the Order of the Commission. It is to be commended.

We must, however, take notice of the fact that General does not have adequate personnel, either in number or in training, to properly maintain these facilities. Recognition again, however, must be given to the fact that the employment and training of personnel takes time and careful planning on the part of management. We view dimly the fact that such personnel, both in number and in training, had deteriorated to such point that the service and maintenance of the General system will continue to suffer in some respects until such personnel have been employed and properly trained. Plant facilities, if adequate, regardless of whether they be of new construction does not in itself guarantee that reasonably adequate service can be rendered. It is elementary that such facilities must be properly maintained by its employees who have been trained and who are under continued supervision. We are of the opinion, based upon the reports, testimony and exhibits before the Commission, that there was a void of long existence in the planning of management in this respect, and both the public and General will continue to suffer in some degree until this problem has been eliminated.

After consideration of all the facts, the Commission is of the opinion and so finds that:

1. General has complied with the ordering provisions of its Order No. 14,638 with regards to Paragraphs 3, 4, 6, and 7 and substantial compliance with Paragraph 5.
2. That service has improved considerably and that the failure to improve service to the level expected by this Commission is a result of the failure to have adequate personnel, both in number and in training.
3. That General has represented to the Commission that it is undergoing and has in operation extensive plans to employ such personnel as needed and that such plans have been implemented to provide training programs which are designed to improve the efficiency of the existing personnel as well as to train persons yet to be employed.
4. That General continue to provide reports as provided under Paragraph 4 and 6.
5. That General provide monthly reports to the Commission showing the number of personnel employed, type of training program involved with a running summary of the number of personnel needed to adequately maintain its system with


certifications from an officer of the Company showing what efforts are being made to eliminate this problem.

6. That officers of General meet with the staff of the Commission or its designated representative at least weekly, at which time the progress of the Company is discussed in full and written reports of such meetings be furnished to the Commission.


7. The Commission will not at this time cause a reduction in the present rates of General based upon the progress made to date and as long as General continues to make progress which will result in its customers receiving such service as expected from General.

8. Failure on the part of General to comply with the provisions of this Order will cause the Commission to invoke the provision 58-491 which provides a penalty up to Five Hundred (\$500.00) Dollars per day for each day General fails to comply with the provisions herein.

AND IT IS SO ORDERED:

  
Chairman

ATTEST:

  
Executive Secretary